

VIII

THE
WITCH of the Woodlands:
OR,
The Cobler's New Translation

Written by L. P.

Here *Robin* the Cobler for his former EVILS,
Was punisht worse than *Faustus* with his Devils.



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THE

Witch of the *Woodlands* :

OR,

The Cobler's New Translation.

CHAP. I.

IN the Wild of Kent, not far from Rumny-Marsh, there dwelt a Merry Conceited Cobler, commonly called Robin the Devil, which afterwards came to be called, The Witch of the Woodlands. This Cobler always had a special care to please his Customers, but chiefly he would be sure, that if any pretty wench brought him a job to do, he would go through with her work first of all; he would be merry in company, and sing in his Shop like a Nightingale; he could cut a Capar with Jack-Pudding, and was not much inferiour to lussy Lawrence, which got eighteen Wenchies with-child all in one year, for it was well known, that he got three Wenchies with-child in one night; but as the Proverb goes, The Pitcher that goes often to the Water, at last comes broken home; and sweet Meat requires sowre Sawce: So it fared with Robin the Cobler, for one of his Wenchies

A 2

bring.

being sudd'nly brought to Bed with a Male-Child, the Mother of the Damsel serb'd Robin the Cobler with a Warrant, and made him to Marry her Daughter out of hand, then was the poor Cobler fallen into a peck of troubles, and knew not how to behave himself; for though he had been Factor of Mars, yet he never was made a Vulcan before that time: And now must he provide for Clouts and Whittels, Fire and Candle, Sope and Starch, white bread and Milk, a Purse and Cradle, with many other matters, which belong to Married Men to look after: but as it is in the old Proverb, That one ill chance follows another, so it was with him, for the other two Damsels which he had formerly made use of, now began to make use of him, and brought him two Children more to keep, which was done both in one day, which when Robin the Cobler did behold, he fell into such a quandary, that the people that beheld him, said, That he lookt so pittiful upon the matter, that they thought in their minds that he would never be good again.

Then began Robin with doleful words, and with wringing hands, to bewail his former follies, saying, O Alley Rogue that I am, was it not enough for me to Sing, Dance, and drink Ale, break Cakes, talk and be Merry amongst Maids,

Maids, but that I must like a Town-Bull, over-
run all that stand in my way, and so in the end
be Poundd for my breaking loose: now I am
in a worse case then Porrage-John, Marriot the
Lawyer, or the Cow-keeper of the Pinder of
Wakefield: I would that my Father had never
begot me, then should I never have gotten so ma-

Here *Robin* for his former Letchery,
Doth suffer in his Members grievously.



ny wenches with-child; or else I would some ho-
nest Sow-gelder had done his Office upon me, to

keep me honest, then had I escap'd the misery now I am sure to endure: Now whilst Robin the Cobler was making his sorrowful lamentation, a friend of his whispered him in the ear, and gave him counsel to be gone from them all, saying, That one pair of Heels is worth two pair of Hands: Whose counsel Robin took, as you shall hear in the following Chapter.

C H A P. II.

RObin the Cobler having hearkned to his friends advice, made no more to do of the matter, but trust up his Tools to be gone, resolving to come up for London, and there to work Journey-work till such time that his Children were come to be Men, and able to work for themselves: but as he passed along the Country, which is called the Wild of Kent, he lost his way in the Woodlands: when Night was almost come upon him, and finding no Path to guide him, he wandred up and down till it was almost ten of the Clock, in a pittifull cold, frosty, dark winters night: but at the last he heard a Cock Crow, whereby he understood that there was some dwelling house near at hand, and so being somewhat comforted to hear the Crowing of the Cock, he
made

made his approach to the House, and knocking at dooz, there came forth an Old Woman with a dish-clout bound about her head, and a Staff in her hand, and demanded of Robin to know what he knockt for. O Mother (qd. he) I am a pooz distressed Traveller which has lost his way, and willing would I be to give Six-pence for a Bed this night to lay my weary bones on: Marry, (qd. she) all the Beds I have are not worth six-pence, for I have no more than what I lye on my self, but if thou wilt take pains to do as I do, thou and I will lye together for once, where we will hugg one another as the Devil hugged the Witch. Robin beholding, and taking notice of her person all the body over, saw that she was long-nos'd, blear-ey'd, crooked-neckt, wyll-mouth'd, Crump-shoulder'd, Bertle-browed, thin-bellied, bow-legg'd, and splay-footed: He began to frame an excuse, saying, Good Mother, I pray you to consider this, That I am a Batchelor, and never came in Bed to any Woman since I was born of my Mother: Wilt thou Swear that, that which thou speakest is true? I will (quoth Robin:) whereupon he heard a Voicce, as if it came out of the top of a Chimney, crying three several times, Robin the Cobler is mine, Robin the Cobler is mine, Robin the Cobler is mine:

These words when he heard, he thought that some the Devil was come to fetch him away alive, and presently he fell into such a trembling condition, that his hands shook, his pulses beat, his heart panted, his head ached, his nose dropt, his belly tumbled, and a certain parcel of melting tears dropt out of the lower end of his breeches, and so falling down upon his knees to the old Woman, desired her to let him have a Lodging how she would, or where she would: then the old woman took him in, and with a remnant of Water which she had kept a long time in a Chamber-pot for that purpose, she washt him from the Crown of the head to the Sole of the foot, and made him as white as if she had washt him in Puppy-dog Water, and so they went lovingly to Bed together: what followed after shall be related in the ensuing discourse.

C H A P. III.

After that Robin the Cobler had taken his first sleep, he awaked, and turning himself on the other side, he felt for his bed-fellow, but she was not there; and having gotten all the bed-room to himself, he began to ponder to himself about the passages which had happened to him the night before, and therewithal he berthought himself how he might use a means to get away before the old Witch his
new

new-made Landlady came back again to him, for he supposed that she had gone forth to fetch company to cut his Throat, but whilst he was thus thinking, in came the old woman with three of her Disciples, with every one of them a light Torch in her hand, crying out all at once, that they would be reveng'd on Robin the Cobler for all his Whore-hunting Tricks: These four Female Witches could Transform themselves into any humane shape at their own pleasure: so she that Robin took to be his Mother-in-Law, brought in an ugly Bear at her heels, another brought in a ravening Wloolf, and the third brought in a sharp, long, broad bladed Knife; poor Robin although the weather was cold, and the Bed-Cloaths very thin, yet he was hot enough: For being in a stinking fear, he covered himself over head and ears, all save one hole that was in the Coverlid, which he now and then closely peep out at, but durst not stir for his life: But now begins the Game: The grand Witch of the Company, otherwise called the Landlady of the house, put her hand under the Bed, and pulled out a Taber and Pipe, and plaid such a fit, that it lasted till almost day: and all this while the other three Witches Danced the Irish-Day with their heels upwards,

wards, mean time poor Robin lay a bed and be-
 pist himself, till at last two quarts run through
 the Bed upon the Ground; whether it were
 done for joy or fear, I le leave that to others,
 such as himself, to consider of; but when the
 Musick was ended, the Bear began to roar,
 and the Wlolf began to howl for Food: Then
 said the Old Witch, I have in the House the
 bravest Breakfast for your two Familiars,
 that they have Feasted on ever since they de-
 voured the two damnable Whores which were
 bewitcht as they rode in a Coach towards a
 Bawdy-house in London; and now since that
 Witches have power of none but Swearers and
 Cursers, Thieves and Dissemblers, Pimps,
 Bawds, and Panders, Whores and Whore-
 hunters, and such like manner of people, let us
 make the best use of our time that we may, and
 now you shall see wat a gallant prize I have
 lighted upon by chance: There was a Merry
 disposed Cobler, which dwelt not far from
 the Town of Rumny, who was every day
 used to Drink, Swagger, Swear and domineer,
 and he would say, that he cared not a Turd
 for all the Witches in the World, and that
 he had a trick to defend himself from the
 power of Witches, which was by Washing
 his Hands, and saying his Prayers every
 morning;

morning; but although he served God in the
 morning, he served the Devil e're night: for
 there was hardly one day in a Week, but he
 would go a Whoring, and he would intice ho-
 nest Wenches to sin by his dissembling speeches
 and his false forswearing himself, making
 them believe, that if he got them with-child, he
 would Marry with them; amongst the rest, he
 got three Widows Daughters with-child all in
 one night, making every one believe that he
 would Marry them the morrow after, which
 he never did intend; but at last Goodwife
 Webb the Widow, forc'd him to Marry
 her Daughter, which being done, the o-
 ther two Wenches which he had got with-
 child, being delivered, brought him their two
 Children to keep, and as he got them all
 three with-Child in one night, so they did
 bring him three Children to keep in one day:
 these things he thought that Witches had
 not known, but my Imps spend not their
 time in vain, for I every night send forth
 my familiar Imp, Madge of Wakefield, in
 the likeness of a black Cat, which told me
 of every thing that Robin the Cobler did:
 but the Archest piece of Roguery that ever
 he did, was done to a Widow Woman in
 the Isle of Thanet, for he promised her Mar-
 riage,

riage, and made her sell her Widows Estate, for 24l. and told her, that if she would lend him the Money to buy him Leather, that he would be Married to her on Thursday next, and wish that if he did not do according to his promise, that he might be torn in pieces with Wolves & Bears, but he never came back to the Widow again : and last of all, he run away from his wife and three children, and now he lies under that Coverlid : When the other three Witches had heard this discovery, they all leapt for joy, & the three Familiar Spirits which went in the shape of a Wolf, a Bear, and a black Cat, were ready to tear the Witches to pieces for victuals, they were so hungry : then said one of them to the rest, seeing he wish'd he might be devoured by Wolves and Bears, he shall have his wish, and he shall be presently cut in Quarters, and the Wolf shall have his Heart, Livers, and Lungs for his Breakfast ; the Bear shall have his Paunch and Bowels, and the Cat shall have his Privy Members to gnaw upon : Nay, quoth the old Witch, it shan't be so, for he shall not have so pleasant a Death, but we will have a little more Sport with him before he dies. That very word procured some comfort to Robin's languishing Spirits, for he had rather chuse to lead a sorrowful life, than

than to dye a sudden death: And now to be brief in the matter, they pull'd the Bed-cloaths from off him, and made him stand up stark-naked as ever he was born befoze them; the Woolf bit him by the Throat, the Bear bit him by the Bum, the Cat bit him by the Members, and every one drew blood of him; but did him no great harm at that time: Now (said the old Witch) we have markt you for

Here *Robin* the Cobler like a Fox doth run
Before the Dogs, whose rage he cannot shun!



our own, and therewithal the past Sentence upon him, that he should have three days punishment for his former offences, and afterwards he was to be eaten up alive; the first of the three
Days

days he was to be transformed into the shape of a Fox, and to be chased with Dogs from morning till night.

The second day he was to be a riding Nag, and to carry the Witch whether she pleased.

The third day he was to be an Owl, and so flye from one place to another all the day long, so having agreed upon the matter, so soon as the day appeared, Robin the Cobler was to be a Fox, and so out of doors they sent him running, and having transformed themselves into the shapes of Dogs, followed close at his heels, and every time they overtook him, they bit him by the Buttocks, and nippt him devilishly, for they had no mercy in their teeth.

The next day they transformed him into the shape of a Horse, and so the Witches got upon his back, three of them at a time, and rid him over Hills and Mountains, through Rivers and Ponds, through all sorts of Waters thick and thin, and worst of all, they rid him through so many Thickets, Brambles, and Briers, till they tore the very skin from the flesh of him, so that the Whore-masters blood of his run from him in many places, and yet were not his sorrows at an end, nor no man knows when they will.

The third day they made an Owl of him, who flying up and down from Tree to Tree, at
 Soon-

Noon-time of the day, crying, Whu, whu, whu,
 the Birds came thick and threefold about him,
 wondring most strangely to see an Owl a-
 broad by day-light, wherefore to fulfill the old
 Proverb, they all fell upon him like Pies up-
 on an Owl; and to be brief, they pluckt him
 Here Robin by the vertue of a Swan,
 Hath broke the Witches Charms, and is a Man.



Feathers, broke his wings, and pickt out one
 of his eyes, this being done, the grand Witch
 consulting with the rest of the Witches, say-
 ing, that Robin the Cobler had done enough
 of

of any conscience for his Wenching tricks, and so turned him into the shape of a Swan.

And last of all, they withdrew their Enchanting Spells, and so Robin the pittiful Cobler became a Man again; but before he departed, they made him kneel down, and kiss every one of their fleshy parts, and therewith they parted Household.

C H A P. IV.

How *Robin* the Cobler having got loose from the Witches, became a new Man, and of many Notable Exploits which he did, you shall presently hear.

NOW when Robin the Cobler had broken the Spells of Witchcraft, his eye-sight, his hearing, his speech, senses, and his knowledge, was all restor'd unto him again, but yet he lookt of a pittiful complexion, just as a Man may say, like one of Pharaoh's Lean Kine; his visage was pale and gaskly, his eyes seemed as if they were sunk into his head, his nose was like the nose of a scolding Ale-wife, long and sharp, and his tongue did gaggle as if it had been made of the Devils Bollock-Leather, his belly and his back was clung together, that he was scarce able to shūt for bones.

For had he any kind of habit to put on that was

was worth the throwing to the Dunghil, only an old lowlie Smock, and a pair of Slip-shoes, which one of the Witches had given him out of her meer pittiful Charity; but yet he knew himself to be in a far more happier taking then he was before, when he was ridden with three He-Debils at one time.

Then began Robin to ruminate, and to think what course he had best to take, and which way was best for him to steer his Helm, and at last he resolved to take his journey once more for the famous City of London, and to try if fortune would afford him any better luck than he had before; but he vowed that he would keep along the Road, and never go through the Woodlands any more, for fear lest the Witches should meet with him again. Now as he passed along on the way, in every Town and Village where he came, the Boys and the Children would run away from him, thinking that he had been mad, insomuch that there was not one idle Boy or Girl to be seen in the Streets; but here comes on the very bitterest of all, poor Robin the Cobler having gone along on his journey for the space of almost two woful Days and Nights, without meat or drink, or money to buy, he began to bewail his sorrowful life in this mournful manner: Oh pittiful Cobler that I
B
am,

am, for now I am in a worse case then ever I was before. When I was a Horse, the Witches did ride me, and put me to much pain, but yet they gave me somewhat to feed on at night, though it were but Bran and Water, which I can prove to be pretty good fare for Horses when they are very hungry, so they may have enough to fill their bellies withal.

When I was a Fox, the Witches in the shapes of Dogs ran after me, and hurried me up and down, and at every stop and turn bit me by the Buttocks: but now am I hunger-bitten, which is ten thousand times worse. When I was an Owl, I was most shamefully abused, and wondred at by other Birds; but now am I made a wondring-stock to all the folks that sees me; insomuch that no man, woman, or child, will not dare to come near me, long of the poverty of my flesh, and disguise of Habit. Oh! what a pittiful wretched case am I in now! an Ape, an Owl, a Fox, a Goose, a Horse, an Or, or an Als, is in a far better taking then I am in, O that I could with Diogines's Mare, feed upon Thistles, or like a Camelion, live by the Ayre. Now whilst he was thus complaining, by chance came along a blind Beggar-Man, which had a whole Wallet full of Fragment of Fish and Meat, and Hamocks of Bread and cheese,

Cheele, which he had gotten amongst his good Benefactors. When Robin the Cobler had firr his ye upon the blind man's Wallet of Virtuals, the very heart in his Belly leapt for joy, hoping that then he should fill his belly once again ; and thereupon taking courage upon him, he made his address, and spake to the blind Beggar-man by way of Complement, knowing that the blind man could not see what manner of person he was, and so taking hold of him by the shoulder, began to express his mind in this manner ; Well over-taken Father, how far walk you this way ? marry, quoth the Beggar, but to the next Village, and for want of a Guide to lead me, I am in fear that I shall come too late to my Lodging : Why, quoth the Cobler, rather then you should do amiss, I will take the pains to lead you my self, for I love Old Men with all my heart.

C H A P. V.

Here followeth a Discourse of the Happy Fortune that happened to *Robin the Cobler* after all his Miseries.

AS Robin the Cobler was leading the blind Beggar along the way, the Blind Man found him to be exceeding diligent, and there-

withal desired of Robin to know who he was that would undervalue himself to take pains to lead him : Then, quoth Robin, I am a Gentleman born and bred, and so you would say if you could but see me ; but as it comes to pass I have never a penny to help my self, for I have been a valiant Cavalier for the King, but by the fortune of the Wars, I am utterly undone for ever, unless some speedy help come by Heavenly Providence. I tell you further, my Land not long since was Sequestered, my Goods and my money taken from me, and my Body



carried

carried to Prison, where I have lain three years, three months, three weeks and three days, and at the last by happy chance: I got out of Prison: but now I am out, I know not how to live, nor how to get one bit of Bread to relieve my hungry Stomach, for I have been fasting two days and nights, and never a bit of Victuals came within my body: Alas for you, good Sir, said the Beggar, I much lament your case, but if you will be pleased to accept of such poor fare as I have in my Wallet, you shall be heartily welcome to it, and the next Ale-house that we come to, I will give you Liquor of the best to swallow it down: whereupon the Wallet was laid down, and the Victuals forced out upon the green Bank. I think there was no need to bid Robin to eat. But when he had filled his belly, away they went together chearfully to the place appointed, where they lay lovingly together that night, and the next day the Beggar brought him home unto his own house, where was plenty of good Cloaths, both of Woolen and Linnen, with which the Beggar suited Robin, and also directed him to a Coffer where was two hundred and fifty pounds of ready Money; All this, quoth the Beggar, shall be your own when I dye, if you will stay with me all my life time.

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Whereupon the Cobler replied with a very good will Sir; which bargain being made, Robin and his old Master would every day walk about to good Mens Houses, to see what Victuals they could get, till at the last, Robin became as running at the Trade as his Master, and was acquainted with most of the Master-beggars that lived in the County of Kent.

But to conclude, In process of time, the blind Beggar dyed, and then all his wealth fell to Robin, who afterwards went home to his former Habitation, and took order for the breeding of his three Children that he got in one night, and gave the two Wenches ten pounds a piece for the injury that he had formerly done them, and threw the rest of the Money into his Wives Lap. And so endeth the Story of Robin the Cobler.

FINIS.







